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29 June 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NIOs  
D/AG  
C/SRP

FROM: C/NIC

SUBJECT: Problem Oriented Planning

As I mentioned at the off-site, I believe the NIC needs a planning process that is problem-solving in its orientation, rather than publication oriented. I want to solicit your contributions to developing such a process in the form of responses to the questions that follow. The whole idea is to identify the most important problems that NIOs severally and the NIC collectively ought to be concentrating on, and to develop strategies for solving or managing them. NIOs should concentrate on their areas of responsibility but may, with due concern for the sensibilities of their colleagues, wish to offer thoughts on related "turf." The AG and the SRP have cart blanche.

What do you see to be the principal foreign and national security policy problems and concerns of the USG over the next 6-12 months? And 3-5 years?

I don't see how you can respond to this without some speculation about the outcome of the November elections and its policy impact. Yet, if non-partisan discretion is exercised, this is both proper and necessary.

What do you think are the most pressing intelligence issues that derive from such policy concerns...or that provide a necessary backdrop to the conduct of policy whatever its specific direction?

Here I'm interested in two kinds of judgment. First, discrimination: We should be concentrating on X and paying less attention to Y for Z reasons. My sense is that, on average, each NIO should identify 5-7 issues...but that's, of course, your call. Things that don't make the cut would be matters that are important but well in hand (any of those?), not truly "national" in nature, or not truly important.

Second, attention to deeper trends that may represent a sea change in the character of the target and, hence, the intelligence task. For example, turbulence in the relationship between government and society in the USSR, the proliferation and concealability of weapons, Islamic fundamentalism, and "internationalization" of economic life are changing the nature of existing intelligence tasks.

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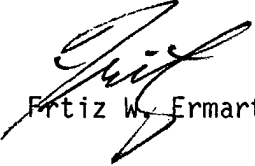
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What strategies, spanning collection, processing, and analysis, are needed to solve these intelligence problems? Do you think these strategies require new resources, skills, or behavior from the Intelligence Community? What do NIOs or the NIC need to do to put the required strategies into effect?

Please give me your response in memo form by 18 July, and copy other addressees of this memo. Length and format is up to you. Responses don't have to be elaborate, but they should be specific enough so that I can imagine the management implications of what you are saying. The deadline is set so I can get responses to reflect on and react to before I go on a short TDY and summer leave. If it's unworkable for some of you, let me know.

  
Fritz W. Ermarth

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